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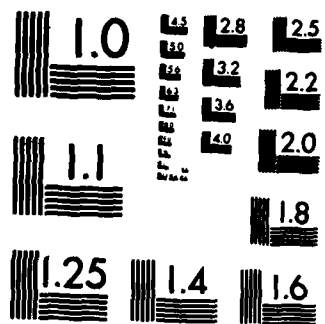
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Konrad Kellen

November 1983

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THE GERMANS AND THE PERSHING II

Konrad Kellen

November 1983

INTRODUCTION

After the Western Allies had victoriously entered Germany in 1945--and this writer was there at the time--they hastened to launch the twin task of "Denazification" and "Demilitarization" of their most recent foe, a foe many thought in view of its history was incorrigible on both counts. Little did the Allies anticipate then that the day was soon to come when they thought they had to remilitarize Germany; and even less did they anticipate that another 30 years later a situation would arise where Germans would come close to bolting from a military alliance with the mighty United States because the latter was now too militaristic for their tastes.

Those are the unexpected, and for many Americans, troublesome and incomprehensible consequences of a demilitarization policy successful beyond all hope held at the time. But during a recent swing through half a dozen major German cities, where this writer had long and short conversations (not interviews!) with important politicians, professors, students, psychiatrists, media representatives of the right and left, prominent and not so prominent people, some 40 Germans in all told him of their unconditional rejection of war.

With the controversy over the stationing of Pershing II and the cruise missiles so much on everybody's mind nowadays, one might think that this widespread anti-war feeling pertains only to these Pershings and cruise missiles, and that Germans just do not want them in their backyards. Far from it! Germans--mirabile dictu--no longer believe in war at all, defensive or offensive, nuclear or conventional, limited or total. To members of the American political establishment, and in fact the "average American," that sounds well nigh fantastic: people not believing in war! Not even in a conventional war! Not in any war at all, even a little one? The traveler returning from abroad is in a precarious position: claiming to have been among people who reject all war is "unacceptable" for them, he must appear as a teller of tall tales.

And yet it is true. With the exception of a hard core of politicians and a curious assortment of others (of whom one never knows whether they accept the missiles and all sorts of war theories to please



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the Americans, or to show that they are cosmopolitan enough to be in tune with the rest of our blithely belligerent world) the descendants of the Huns and Teutons, these formerly mindless followers of the Kaiser and Hitler now think and feel differently. That does not mean they have all become "pacifists" (not everybody who does not "buy" war is a pacifist) or "leftist." It just means that, having rebuilt in Herculean labors their cities that were almost totally destroyed in World War II (with those harmless little conventional weapons of the era), having had a true taste of war by having had it in their own country, for the first time, and now being situated only a few kilometers from the "enemy," and last but not least, confronting their fellow natives on the other side, most Germans no longer see war as a sensible means toward anything.

It always is hazardous to attribute results to any effort, but it does not seem likely, in any event, that the current anti-martial spirit in Germany is due entirely or even mainly to the demilitarization efforts as they were practiced by the occupying forces after 1945. Rather it apparently was the direct experience of the war itself that produced this profound change in the Germans. Be that as it may, their anti-military spirit is reality now.

HOT FALL, WINTER, SPRING, OR ANYTHING

Yet, the United States deploying the Pershing II on German soil need not worry about a hot "anything." Just as Germans, for the first time in their history, have come to reject offensive or defensive war as a "continuation of politics by other means," they have come to renounce violence in the same fashion. This seems just as hard to understand for non-Germans as it is that Germans now no longer accept war, considering that even the Weimar Republic, imbedded as a seeming democracy between the arrogant Kaiserreich and the maniacal Third Reich, was the site of over 200 political assassinations, most of which were punished by the courts of the new democracy with hardly more than a slap on some wrists. And it is even harder to believe as West Germany, for a decade after the student rebellions of 1968, was the scene of some of the most violent and murderous terrorist activities. But that just proves the point: the notorious Baader-Meinhof gang (RAF-Rote Armee Fraktion) never had more than two dozen members and, according to very well informed police,

never more than 200 real helpers and sympathizers; contrary to what the revolutionary terrorists thought and hoped, most Germans of whatever age or stripe would have nothing to do with them, not because some were not radical, but because of the violence.

Demonstrations are a different matter. The Germans have discovered the political instrument of demonstrations with a vengeance, and love to practice it. But they believe in nonviolent "demos," as they call them, albeit very visible and audible ones; and the German police, having shed its totalitarian attitudes, have also become adjusted to dealing with "demos" without violence. This does not mean no act of violence will ever occur in connection with the "Nachruestung" (additional deployment). Even though the Baader-Meinhof gang seems almost entirely eliminated, there are still some other terrorist groups active in West Germany, notably the Revolutionary Cells which practice minor violence such as throwing stones; but they seem to have no resonance in the public either, and thus it can be confidently predicted that there will be no organized and no popular violence practiced against the deployment of the Pershings. That simply is not the problem. The problems lie elsewhere.

CONFLICTING VIEWS ON SECURITY

The principal reason why Germans seem almost universally opposed to the deployments of Pershing II missiles is that they have a different view from the American view of *security* and how to attain it. One reason for that, in turn, is that they have a different view from the one we hold of the Soviet Union and its designs. Most Germans seem convinced that the last thing the Russians would do is start a war, whether the Russians perceive a Western vulnerability or not. One conservative German exclaimed: "Can you imagine, there was a fellow here from the U.S. who was studying weather conditions at the Fulda gap!," whereupon he burst out laughing. Germans are afraid of the Russians in a different way: Many see Russia as a great, implacable, slow-moving, all-devouring, irresistible monster, but a monster too smart to start a war, and too wounded still by its horrible losses in World War II to make or even risk war. Therefore, the only way war could occur, in the minds of a lot of Germans, is if the U.S. provoked

the monster too far or scared it too much. And many Germans feel that America does provoke the Russians unwisely and needlessly, and are exasperated with the U.S. for that reason. They believe what the Russians say when they claim the Pershing is a provocation for them; and they do not want to provoke the Russians, either through Pershings or even a bitter condemnation of the Korean plane incident. Afraid though they are of the Russians, and what they regard as their designs, they do not see them as military aggressors, at least not in Europe. That train of thought makes Pershings militarily superfluous and politically dangerous in their minds.

ANTI-AMERICANISM

Americans armed with Geiger counters measuring anti-Americanism around the world believe to find a lot of it in Germany, but there is no, or hardly any, fundamental anti-Americanism in Germany today. Germans are increasingly critical of what the U.S. says and does, particularly under the present administration, and are often scared or baffled by the United States, but they remain solidly in the U.S. column nevertheless. A sign on a fast food stand during a recent anti-Pershing demonstration reading: "*Pepsi*, Not *Pershing*," though frivolous perhaps and even silly, sums up the attitudes now prevailing. Perhaps Germans like most about the U.S. what our elites regard as our least accomplishments, such as *Pepsi* or jeans or jazz or tiled bathrooms. Be that as it may, especially young Germans like the United States, want to go to the United States as soon as they can manage to buy a ticket, want to know what is happening in the United States, want even to emigrate there.

How different that is from German feelings for the Russians! Nobody in Germany would advertise "*Kvas*, Not SS 20," if by the call for *Kvas* were meant a symbolic acceptance of Russia and its culture. Germans as a whole learn English, not Russian. They have no desire to visit Russia, let alone emigrate there. They are not interested in what is going on in Russia. They may sometimes say to the superpowers: A plague on both your houses. But that pertains only to military activities and pretensions. Outside of that, German feelings for Russia and America are diametrically opposite. Germans are indeed

anti-Russian. But they are not anti-American, even though they sometimes feel endangered by American policies and rhetoric and also are often annoyed by what they regard as a continuing abridgement of their sovereignty so long after the war.

What worries and antagonizes Germans is what they regard as America's two obsessions: with the Russians, and with war. They complain that the U.S. thinks of Germans and other Europeans only as rooks in its games with the Soviet Union. But even that does not seem to produce any malignant anti-Americanism or even neutralism in most of those who harbor such views.

MOVING TO THE LEFT?

Many Germans do not like it that Americans tend to regard any criticism of Pershing II on their part as leftist thinking. There are many people in Germany who are conservative, and who also are critical and afraid of the deployment of the new missiles. Nor does it endear the United States with them if they are given the benefit of the doubt, to the effect that they are simply not knowledgeable with regard to military affairs or even dupes of the enemy if they oppose the weapons. Of course, many people in Germany are on the left, but a negative attitude against the "Nachrüstung" is not ipso facto evidence thereof.

In this connection as in others, many Germans feel misunderstood by the Americans. One sophisticated German observer who has extensive contacts with U.S. intelligence agencies in Germany expressed the view that--in general--American observers in Germany had been of a lower caliber and shown less understanding ever since the Carter administration, and were apparently not able to convey to Washington what was going on.

Despite the very widespread and intense resistance to the deployment of the Pershing II, there is no indication that Germans as a whole, or even the SPD, after having become the major opposition party, have moved to the left.

NATO

One trouble with NATO as far as Germans are concerned, is that it is an *alliance*, i.e., a military instrument, and Germans (and apparently Europeans in general) are not very interested in that, and not inspired by that. Though Germans regard it as vitally important that the United States be strong (and in their view, a little smarter), they do not regard it as important that they have a military alliance with the United States in the way, say, the Poles regarded it as important--rightly so--to have an alliance with England and France before World War II. In fact, it seems, the Germans do not really regard themselves as *allies* of the United States at all, but more of a *protectorate* of America. This brings to mind a joke currently being told in West Germany. Defense Secretary Manfred Woerner asks a soldier: "Why do we favor an alliance with the U.S.?" The soldier replies: "Mr. Secretary, I have been asking that myself for some time now."

How do they like being a protectorate? There is, as one might expect, some ambivalence to be found on that score, but most Germans seem to regard this as a necessity, not so much for military as for political and economic reasons.

THE GREENS

The visitor talked to several Greens, in particular Thea Bach who is a Green's representative in the Hamburg City Parliament. She is a former school teacher who was politically engaged and active for a long time before joining the Greens. She admits without hesitation that she had been an admirer of the late Ulrike Meinhof, one of Germany's most famous terrorists, and parted ways with her only when Meinhof began to practice and endorse violence. As for Meinhof's radical political ideas, Bach still mostly subscribes to them. Bach felt that one of the great strengths of the Green's movement was that they were internationally connected with what she called like-minded groups, in particular the anti-nuclear groups in the U.S.

The most interesting aspect of the Greens is that they appear to be the only political party in the world, East or West, that does not try to enforce party unity or even consensus. In the eyes of some, that is

a daring experiment but may have a very high payoff. The Greens may multiply rapidly and resistance to United States military strategies, concepts, and initiatives to which the Greens are opposed may well receive a further substantial and growing boost from that quarter.

THE KOREAN PLANE SHOOTDOWN

Ubiquitous reactions to the shootdown of the Korean plane threw additional light on U.S.-German differences. The more conservative German press vociferously condemned the incident, but Germans on the whole seemed more worried about the United States turning the event into a casus belli or nearly so, than they were enraged by the Russians shooting down the plane. Germans were *not* surprised that the Russians would do such a thing--they see the Russians as doing terrible things routinely. Nor were they alarmed by it in the sense that the Russians had now "shown their true face." Germans think they know the true Russian face. What distressed many of them was that they expected the incident to stiffen America's intransigence in Geneva--then their last dim hope for avoiding the stationing of the Pershings. They did not like the heavy American verbal condemnations of the case because they think such utterances project weakness and cause trouble; and they don't like boycotts or other crusade-type actions in which they are somehow expected to participate. They see themselves as a merely medium-sized power that is in no position to make moral judgments about others and act on them. They feel that anything that increases the risk of war or even accelerated confrontation is too great, as any form of war would spell the immediate end of Germany.

THE MASS GRAVE IN THE FOREST

An example of the German attitude of "Deterrence, yes--War, no" occurred last September in the course of fall maneuvers in West Germany. The U.S. Army tested a new mechanical device to dig a mass grave in which to bury casualties, and the U.S. Army spokesman explained that, after all, you have to clean up after every battle. German media expressed consternation at this, revealing once again that they may believe in, or at least go along with, nuclear deterrence efforts, but they definitely do not believe in war. They see nothing illogical in

this stance and do not seem amenable to the American argument that in order for deterrence truly to deter, i.e., to be credible, there must be complete and realistic readiness and willingness to fight the war on all levels. But the mass grave, like the intermediate range missiles on their soil, was just *too* realistic for their taste. As for the rationale that all facets of warfare in Europe must be realistically prepared to make the range of capabilities seamless and therefore deterrence credible, Germans rather suspect that the U.S. is decoupling itself from a possible war in Europe, a war, moreover, the U.S. might provoke by its current behavior which they regard as reckless, and also by making the Russians believe they might *not* have to confront the U.S. proper in a conflict in Europe. In other words, what U.S. strategists see as a recoupling of the deterrent, many Germans see as the exact opposite: a decoupling, with a cynical readiness by the United States to see a West Europe-USSR engagement. And they are very sensitive on that subject, not to say openly hostile.

PATRIOTISM

"Americans are patriots," said the newspaper editor, "and Russians are patriots. But we Germans are not patriots any longer. We regard ourselves as Europeans and we enjoy being Europeans. But we are not patriots." There is a special reason why Germans are not patriots. Due to the fact that under Hitler, Germany committed more and worse crimes than any tribe in history, they cannot yet be proud again of being Germans. As ex-terrorist Horst Mahler stated:

Germans have not attained the aim they talked about for a decade; to overcome, or master (there is no true English equivalent) what they politely call their past, meaning the insanities and crimes they collectively committed under Hitler, with more than 20 million human beings killed tortured and agonized.

Germans may not associate themselves with the Nazi generation in their minds, but they know, ninety percent of them, that they, or their parents were ardent Nazis. And in one corner of their minds they are ashamed of Germany for it. America may long have forgiven them, but they have not forgiven themselves. That does not mean they do not like

their country (although very many of the young indeed do not like it very much and want to emigrate, and some of the middle-aged too, which does not reflect great love of country). Many Germans like Germany sufficiently well now and feel reasonably comfortable there, and are no longer ashamed to be Germans. But they still are not comfortable with foreigners and feel they must defend--not their country, but themselves--against the Nazi accusation. Thus, even if the military situation were altogether different, if there were no nuclear weapons, if they did not feel--militarily--as a helpless pawn between Russia and the United States, they would still lack the fuel without which no warfighting is imaginable: patriotism, which is not mere affection for one's country, but an aggressive readiness to fight and die for the country one is proud of, in and with armed services that have a tradition of honor and victory. Germans now have none of that.

Germans have changed in the last half century. No longer is it true, as Churchill used to say, that "the Hun is either at your feet or at your throat." Germans no longer are at anyone's throat, and do not wish to be at anyone's throat, including the Russian throat at which they were so much so brutally; nor do they wish any longer to grovel before anyone, having grovelled so long after World War II, especially at the feet of the Americans (perhaps it did not seem that way to the Americans, but apparently it seemed that way to them). As one observer said in conversation, "Germans still are not free even though their present state allows them more freedom than they ever had." But they are trying to acquire the habit, and whether they are on the right or wrong track, their ideas as to what it means to become free seem to vary from what Americans seem to think free Germans could or should be. What they seem to be seeking now is a form of freedom without patriotism.

A PREFERENCE FOR CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS?

Perhaps one of the more striking results of talks with Germans is that contrary to most Americans, Germans do not categorically distinguish between nuclear and conventional war. They regard nuclear war as "unthinkable," be it tactical or strategic, but they regard conventional war in Europe and especially on their soil, and still more so with the new weapons, as *equally* unthinkable. For that reason their

position is quite logical: if both nuclear and conventional war is unthinkable, unfightable, and unacceptable under any conditions, then it is not necessary to distinguish between the two types of weapons. They remember, they say, what their cities looked like after having been worked over by conventional weapons in World War II when the power of those weapons was but a fraction of the contemporary models. And they seem in no mood to lose the cities they rebuilt in a few air raids during some preliminary holding engagements, or the lives that would go with it, such as the 130,000 they are said to have lost in that single raid on Dresden in 1945.

Finally, few seem to care who should win the war in the end, should war occur, as they do not expect to survive it, be it nuclear or conventional.

THE PEACE MOVEMENT

Most respectable Germans over 30 do not join the peace movement or any other movement that demonstrates in the streets. They also suspect that the peace movement is financed and supported by the Soviets, at least in part. And according to some sophisticated sources, the peace movement now does receive about 60 million marks (about 25 million dollars) a year from behind the iron curtain. But even though such large sums assure for the communists a strong influence on the German peace movement, Germans do not regard it as either communist originated, or communist dominated.

How effective Germans think the peace movement can be depends on how effective they think demonstrations can be. Here opinions are divided. There are some who think that "demos" are merely a device to blow off steam and may therefore literally take that steam out of the movement; others think demos are a warning to establishment politicians that the establishment politicians will find increasingly hard to ignore. The unquestionably local, i.e., nonartificial origin and nature of the movement, plus a number of developments playing into its hands, plus the large financial contributions, are more likely than not to make it an effective instrument.

TOTAL DETERRENCE

Germans like the idea of deterrence, they believe in it, they feel it is necessary, and they want it to continue, but they feel it can-- or need--do only so much. The West, they think, cannot attain total deterrence, and certainly not by piling every conceivable weapons system on top of the already monstrous heap. Deterrence they think cannot be an absolute guarantee of anything. Deterrence is seen only as a heavy but sufficient impediment in the path of the Soviet Union which they do not, one must remember, regard as an "aggressor" in any event the way Americans do. Germans do not seem to believe that the net of deterrence and flexible responses can be made so tight as to preclude all Soviet moves even *theoretically*. On the contrary, they apparently believe, like former Secretary of Defense McNamara now does, that efforts to flesh out deterrence to the point where the U.S. has ever increasing and broadening capabilities of every conceivable type is seen as such a threat by the Soviet Union that risks are increased rather than decreased. Therefore, they do not believe current U.S. military postures in Europe make deterrence more effective or credible. Nor do they even believe that that is the purpose. They suspect the Reagan administration of regarding warfighting of one kind or another--decoupled from central war--as an option Americans now actively contemplate, whereas *they* do not accept it even as a last resort, with nuclear or conventional engagements.

Of course, not every German feels or talks that way. A good many conservative German politicians, and also some members of an outstanding German strategic "think tank" follow current American strategic thinking in every respect. But one never knows whether they believe it or merely try to curry favor. Some of what they say is reminiscent of how "our Vietnamese" were thinking and talking in Vietnam.

Naturally, there are also people in the upper political and financial echelons, and a range of intellectuals who endorse American military thinking and the deployment of Pershing II and the cruise missiles. After all, 286 members of the Bundestag out of 512 voted for Pershing, and the big, influential, and excellent Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung endorses American policies and thinking all the way. But it

does not just explain and opine; it literally beseeches, almost every day and with many often farfetched arguments, its readers whom it apparently perceives as unconverted.

FINLANDIZATION OF WEST GERMANY?

The term Finlandization is mentioned only rarely. One German observer thought that to the extent the term connoted neutrality, it did not and would never apply to Germany; Germany was and would remain firmly on the American side. But militarily, he thought, there was some truth in it, in that Germany absolutely could not see itself involved in any military action, and would refuse to fight if it were asked to do so. This, however, was not neutralism (nor "pacifism"), in his view. Germans were absolutely not neutral in the East-West struggle, and no amount of critical feelings vis-a-vis the U.S., or possible increase in German sovereignty and independence could make them so.

BIZARRE JOURNEYS AND THE IMAGE OF REUNIFICATION

The recent spate of visits on the part of West German dignitaries to East Germany, and the extension of credits, is evidence of the schizophrenic attitude West Germans (and perhaps East Germans, too) have to partition. Whereas a veteran communist fighter like Franz Josef Strauss would never dream of visiting a Communist headquarters in West Germany, he saw no reason not to visit the Communist rulers in the East, or to endorse large credits for them. It must be that he sees the people beyond the Berlin Wall as co-Germans rather than communists. Quite a few Germans seem baffled by this newly escalated chumminess between East and West Germany. To the extent that they see it as an anti-Soviet move, they still can barely understand it, but they cannot quite imagine that these demarches are meant to be a prelude to genuine re-unification efforts. Germans seem strangely resigned -- and have for a long time -- to partition. Perhaps the reason for the equanimity or fatalism with which they have viewed that partition as a *fait accompli*, to be reversed perhaps only a very long time from now, perhaps never, may be found in the disappearance or at least waning of patriotism, that has been touched on above, and represents a fundamental change in German attitudes and moods since before World War II.

Beyond that, any rapprochement between the two Germanys may be intended, consciously or not, to be a reminder to the two super powers that one of the many unacceptable features of any kind of war in Central Europe would be possible or even likely battles between East and West Germans--a doubly unthinkable aspect of an already unthinkable war.

EURO-PESSIMISM

There is everywhere in Germany some of what has been called Euro-pessimism, particularly among the older and more conservative Germans. This seems perhaps paradoxical at first glance: German conservatives predicting that ultimately the Russians will prevail. Such Germans are nevertheless a living phenomenon. Blamed primarily for that sad outcome is America's--in the minds of such pessimists' excessive and unrealistic--reliance on military power and strategies, and preoccupation with weapons and numbers of weapons. A close second reason for such pessimism in Germany, however, is a circumstance that has nothing to do with the United States. It is the generally deplored and apparently real fact that Germans "no longer want to work." Worn out perhaps by the prodigious rebuilding of their cities, their industrial plant and their economy since World War II, many no longer want to work more than 35 hours a week, which is what the unions now demand without a corresponding reduction in wages. And most people seem to agree (perhaps even including some of those who call for this measure) that such reduction of effort, coupled with Japanese and other competition, must lead to disaster, especially with the economy being what it is at present.

SUMMARY AND THE LONG RANGE PROSPECT

Based on what has been said above, it would appear most unlikely that the deployment of Persing II will produce substantial and/or politically tricky violence. On the other hand, the new weapons are almost certain to contribute to the growing distress most Germans seem to feel about the partnership with the Americans, and intensify and broaden this feeling over time to a great degree. Most Germans seem to see the deployment as

1. Unnecessary to deter the Russians.
2. Evidence of U.S. "decoupling" intentions, which they have suspected to exist for a long time.
3. An unnecessary and dangerous psychological escalation in the East-West confrontation.
4. Last, but most important of all, as evidence of a growing American view that "warfighting" is actually possible, and a limited war winnable. Germans do not believe that such a war is fightable or winnable, and what is more important, they do not care whether it is winnable or not. To a man (or woman) interviewed by this writer, old or young, right or left, all insisted that in *any* kind of war Germany would, from the first day, simply be "weg," i.e., vanished from the earth, gone and done with.

One might say that just as much as the near term produces no reason for serious worry regarding the deployment, the long term seems to be the exact opposite. Distressed and alienated by what Germans regard as the new U.S. posture, primarily as exemplified by the Pershing II, a posture that jeopardizes their national existence (so they seem to feel), and offers them up as sacrificial lambs should war occur (which, in turn, they think is more likely to occur if the increasingly reckless Americans regard such war as fightable and winnable), they seem to turn increasingly into passive and exasperated *onlookers* of the confrontation between the giants rather than active NATO partners. As, in addition, they see the Russians in a different light (not more favorably, just differently) than the Americans, the long term outlook for their being effective NATO partners would appear to be every bit as unfavorable--if the U.S. persists in current approaches--as the near term outlook for their accepting the Pershing deployment would seem good.

Presumably, it did not worry most Germans at the time of the Double-Track Decision that the keys to weapons stationed in Germany were in American hands, and that therefore the determination to use them (inviting retaliation) would be made in American heads. But now this *does* worry Germans who fear that Americans will not see eye to eye with

them in emergencies. For example, if the Russians should suddenly grab all of Berlin, the West Germans, though badly shaken, probably would not want nuclear war, or any kind of war, over that issue simply because they want no war under any condition. But Americans might consider a grabbing of Berlin as reason enough to do some fighting, the Germans think.

Helmut Schmidt apparently did not consider in 1979 that Germans would eventually become uncomfortable with those keys in American hands, nor that new administrations in Washington might, by their words and actions, intensify German unease on that score. Now that so many Germans have come to regard the American government as reckless, steeped in dubious warfighting theories and essentially ignorant of Europe and the Soviet Union, opposition to Pershing type weapons on German soil must grow. Like Americans, Germans think that the nuclear bomb "is safe in the hands of St. Francis"; but Germans just no longer seem to believe that America is St. Francis.

Then, should any fighting occur in Europe, many Germans would say something like this: "True, the Russians are the bad guys, but the Americans precipitated this thing." With German government officials, media people, ordinary people and perhaps even military people reasoning this way, the Bundeswehr is likely to collapse within the first three days of any shooting conflict, as would the government if it supported the war effort.

The immediate result of such a debacle could then be an unleashing of the Pershings and cruise missiles by the Americans. For Americans might regard a collapse of the Bundeswehr as sufficiently disastrous and dangerous to push the buttons in Europe. But Germans would probably not see it that way. Even a collapse of their Bundeswehr would not be regarded by them as justifying a resort to nuclear weapons, not because they would not regard such collapse as a disaster, but because they would regard Soviet retaliation against an unleashing of Pershings as an even greater and additional disaster. And they would regard it as a greater disaster even than to fall under Russian rule, terrible though they think that would be, and hostile though they are and will remain to the Russians and communism. But they probably would, contrary to Americans, regard it as *fate*, and accept it. How do we know? One might ponder what one very conservative and sophisticated German stated:

I do not believe in your slogan, 'Rather Dead than Red.' That is just academic and easy to say for someone thousands of miles away and in your position. I would hate to live under communism or have my children live under communism. But, in the first place, I have lived under some terrible systems that eventually changed or disappeared. I'm glad I survived them, and I'd rather stay alive now, too. Besides, do you really think everybody in East Germany leads such a life of horror that he hates being alive? Americans just don't know how people live and feel there. These people lead perfectly adequate lives, most of them, a bit drab perhaps and very *petit bourgeois* which is the typical communist way, but they accept that. As I said, I would hate to live that life, but I would prefer it to having myself and my family torn apart by a smart bomb any time.

Thus the thinking modes of Germans and Americans are reversed: In former times American thinking was more pragmatic, and German thinking more academic--now it is the other way around. Anyone who has actually been to war may not find this surprising: those closer to the front line always think more pragmatically, while those in the rear think academically.

CONCLUSIONS

↳ The author concludes...
Just as it can be confidently predicted, on the basis of all the foregoing, ^{in West Germany} that the reception of the Pershings, though hostile and noisy and turbulent, will not be violent. ~~it can be predicted with equal confidence~~ that in case of war--any kind of war for any kind of reason--the Germans will not fight, even if their government and their commanders would try to make them fight, which is doubtful. Perhaps a few isolated rounds will be fired; a few kamikaze pilots will drop a conventional bomb or two, and a few isolated heroic soldiers will fight to the death in defense of some building. But any type of organized military campaign of attack or defense by the Bundeswehr is entirely unlikely.

Essentially, this is not a new development. Contrary to their attitudes at other times, Germans have regarded war in Europe as unthinkable and unacceptable ever since their defeat in WW II, which in the end took its horrible course on their soil. Instead, they were--perhaps only lukewarm--believers in the early deterrence concepts as

promulgated by John Foster Dulles ("Massive Retaliation," as a deterrent). They also were--perhaps only lukewarm--supporters of their Bundeswehr, which they built and financed mainly to propitiate the Americans who saw it as such an important piece in the earlier "trip wire" concept and the subsequent concept of flexible response, and which was bitterly opposed to the end by Adenauer. Germans never really embraced the flexible response concept to begin with. Even Helmut Schmidt, in the book he wrote when he was Minister of Defense, *Verteidigung oder Vergeltung* (Defense or Revenge) did not embrace that concept. To the extent Germans embraced it at all they embraced it perhaps for non-European theaters, but not for Europe, where an application of that concept would have exposed them to immediate destruction from both sides.

When Helmut Schmidt called for medium-range missiles in West Germany, he probably did so because he was afraid, as de Gaulle had been long before him, that an American nuclear-response to any Russian foray in Europe was not credible, and that the Pershings would recouple the U.S. to Europe and thereby flesh out the deterrent. But whether this train of thought was valid at the time, and whether or not his fellow countrymen shared it, they do not, it seems, share it now for all the reasons given here; and for all those same reasons the very architect of the idea, now no longer leading his fellow countrymen, is now isolated in his own party, a minority of one. He endorses the deployment of Pershing II, but no longer endorses any American strategic concepts, at least not publicly. Instead, he proclaims at every turn that his own double-track suggestion of 1979 was based on the assumption that the Americans would negotiate effectively in Geneva which, he says, they did not do.

Paradoxical though it may seem, ^{this} the picture ~~drawn above~~ is not particularly pessimistic. The fact that NATO cannot be regarded as a genuine military alliance on the patterns of alliances prior to World War II is nothing new; the fact just has not been and is not being recognized. Nor is there anything particularly alarming about it; if the superpowers should ever have a go at each other, their "allies"--be it in NATO or COMECON--are of no relevance. At the same time, the U.S. "allies" cannot be used for proxy wars ~~either~~ or ~~as was indicated~~.

~~above~~, for tactical war or even holding operations. They ~~are what they~~
~~are and have been~~, for almost 40 years, ~~now~~ protectorates of the United
States, forward real estate if the super powers elect to fight each
other on the ground.

But they are important trading partners of the U.S., political
friends, and cultural co-Westerners. (even the Germans, despite their
peculiarly non-Western history). It would be useful, therefore, to
recognize the reality as it is. This act alone could draw the Western
world together much more closely than attempts to strengthen or save the
fictitious alliance with its primary emphasis on military levers and
military cohesion with which Germans as a whole have no sympathy and
which, even to the extent they follow it like reluctant donkeys,
alienates them from rather than binds them to the United States.

Such change in policy on the part of the U.S. toward a more
nonmilitary partnership would not "deter" the Russians any less than the
current military "alliance" which they see, rightly, as shot through
with reluctance, anger, and unresolvable internal contradictions. It
seems to be precisely the ever growing U.S. insistence on the military
alliance that creates in Europe the troubled waters in which the
Russians are fishing. Why give them even fatter fish to catch?

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